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Letter dated 20 October 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith the text of a letter addressed to you by the Foreign Minister of Israel, Shlomo Ben Ami, in which he presents an update on the events which have taken place since the Sharm Al-Sheikh Summit (see annex).

I should also like to thank you for your efforts in recent days to bring about an end to the bloodshed and facilitate the return of calm and security to our region.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 40, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yehuda **Lancry**
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 20 October 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

20 October 2000

I am writing to you upon the conclusion of the Sharm Al-Sheikh Summit. I would like to bring you up to date regarding Israel's compliance with the understandings reached at the Summit as well as with our assessment of the current situation on the ground.

As you may know, at the Sharm Al-Sheikh Summit both Israel and the Palestinian Authority agreed upon the implementation of several points, as stated by President Clinton:

First, both sides have agreed to issue public statements that unequivocally call for a complete end to all violence. While Israel immediately issued such a statement, it took the Palestinian Authority over 24 hours to reciprocate. During that time Palestinian gunmen continued provoking Israel's security forces throughout the territories and in Jerusalem. One police officer was critically injured in Jerusalem just a few hours after the Summit ended. Yesterday, there was yet another vicious attack: a group of civilians, including women and children, was attacked by Tanzim forces while touring Mount Eival near the Palestinian-controlled city of Nablus. One civilian, a father of eight, was killed as a result of this attack and four others were injured. Meanwhile, the Palestinian media is still manifesting hatred and incitement contrary to the Sharm Al-Sheikh understandings. Shootings and armed confrontations are still being initiated by the Palestinians even as I write these words to you.

I would like to stress the key role played in the last events by the Tanzim paramilitary armed group, sponsored by the Fatah organization. Israel has repeatedly warned that this armed militia, consisting of thousands of armed members, is instigating serious incidents and riots in the territories. Needless to say, such behaviour runs contrary to all agreements signed with the Palestinian Authority. Undoubtedly, this outbreak of violence in the territories in the past weeks, culminating in the last two days' violation of the recent Sharm Al-Sheikh understandings, was carried out by the Tanzim in full cooperation with the Palestinian Authority.

One does not need better evidence than the actual words of Marwan Barghouty, head of the Tanzim group, on Israel Television the very day after the Summit ended: "*I think that the Fatah movement is carrying out its role in leading this intifada and will continue to do so ... I think that this conflict will continue, maybe even escalate, and will take other forms and shapes in the future ...*".

Second, both sides have agreed that the United States will develop, in consultation with the United Nations, a "Fact-finding Committee" that will examine the events of recent weeks. A final report is to be submitted to President Clinton and will later be published. Israel welcomes any efforts made by the United States and the international community to end the violence of the last few weeks, and will fully cooperate with the committee.

Third, both sides have agreed to take immediate concrete measures to eliminate points of friction, redeploy forces, maintain calm, end incitement and

restore law and order. As agreed, Israel has taken the following steps in full compliance with the understandings reached at Sharm Al-Sheikh: Israel Defence Forces troops and armoured vehicles were redeployed, the Gaza airport was reopened and the closure within the territories was removed. More measures, that are meant to ease the situation on the ground, were taken as well.

Finally, in his concluding remarks, President Clinton mentioned the need to address the underlying roots of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Naturally, the issue of the prospects for resuming negotiations for a permanent status agreement came up. Both sides have agreed to examine those prospects in two weeks' time.

Israel's commitment to peace is no secret and needs no proof. At Camp David Israel displayed unprecedented openness and flexibility. It is essential for the international community to understand that the degree and intensity of the recent violence and terror have not been witnessed before. Israel is determined to put a complete end to all violence before talks can be resumed.

Ultimately, the test is on the ground. The next hours and days are critical not only to the future of the negotiations but mostly to the prospects of stability and peaceful coexistence in the region. I do hope that the Palestinians understand this as well.

May I, therefore, call upon you to add your voice in condemnation of all violence and exert your influence on the Palestinian Authority leadership to fully comply with what was agreed upon. We have to stand firm against all violations of the Sharm Al-Sheikh understandings and work together in order to stabilize the situation, thus enabling us to maintain hope for future progress.

(*Signed*) Shlomo **Ben Ami**
Minister for Foreign Affairs